

Appl. No. 10/659,808
Amendment
February 15, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1-39 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 14 and 27 have been amended via this paper to more clearly define the invention and in no way should be construed as limiting the scope of any limitation. Therefore, all limitations and claims shall be construed to include all equivalents under the doctrine of equivalents.

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his efforts with regard to the Official Office Action, dated December 21, 2004, related to the above referenced application. The Applicants also wish to express appreciation for the Examiner's willingness to conduct a personal interview with Applicant's representatives Mr. James E. Shultz Jr. and Mr. Jeremy Sleeper on February 10, 2005; the substance of this interview is memorialized herein.

Turning to page 2 of the Official Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that he did not receive exhibits B and C from a previously filed affidavit. Therefore, the Applicants are resubmitting these two exhibits herewith. Additionally, as discussed during the personal interview, MPEP §715.07 states that the affiant need not present evidence as to the exact date of invention; all that is needed is that the affiant state that the date is earlier than the effective date of the reference being antedated. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that the earlier cited Schofield et al. reference is prior art to the current application.

With further reference to page 2 of the Official Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 33, 34, and 38 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,471,339, to Ise et al. The Applicants, as discussed during the personal interview with the Examiner, respectfully submit that Ise et al. does not teach, suggest or imply an optical sensor system configured to be mounted to a vehicle, comprising: at least one optical sensor and at least one lens; and at least one electro-optic variable aperture positioned between said at least one optical sensor and said at least one lens along an optical axis of said optical sensor, wherein said electro-optic variable aperture comprises a solution-phase medium electro-optic medium as recited in claim 1. In that claims 2, 7, 8 and 12 depend from claim 1, the Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 7, 8 and 12 are allowable over Ise et al.

As further discussed during the personal interview, the Applicants respectfully submit that Ise et al. does not teach, suggest or imply an optical system configured to be mounted to a vehicle, comprising: at least one electro-optic variable aperture comprising at least a center area with different light ray attenuation characteristics than an area at least partially surrounding said center area, wherein the optical system is incorporated in a vehicle equipment system as recited in claim 14. In that claims 15, 20, 21 and 25 depend from claim 14, the Applicants submit that claims 14, 15, 20, 21 and 25 are allowable over Ise et al.

As further discussed during the personal interview, the Applicants respectfully submit that Ise et al. does not teach, suggest or imply an optical sensor system

configured to be mounted to a vehicle, comprising: at least one optical sensor; and at least one electro-optic variable aperture positioned along an optical path of said at least one optical sensor, said electro-optic variable aperture is operable to selectively attenuate light rays, wherein the optical sensor system is incorporated in a vehicle equipment system as recited in claim 27. In that claims 28, 33, 34 and 38 depend from claim 27, the Applicants submit that claims 27, 28, 33, 34 and 38 are allowable over Ise et al.

Turning to page 4 of the Official Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 7-9, 12, 25, 27, 28, 33-35 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,880,872, to Udaka. The Applicants, as discussed during the personal interview with the Examiner, respectfully submit that Udaka does not teach, suggest or imply an optical sensor system configured to be mounted to a vehicle, comprising: at least one optical sensor and at least one lens; and at least one electro-optic variable aperture positioned between said at least one optical sensor and said at least one lens along an optical axis of said optical sensor, wherein said electro-optic variable aperture comprises a solution-phase medium electro-optic medium as recited in claim 1. In that claims 2, 7-9 and 12 depend from claim 1, the Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 7-9 and 12 are allowable over Udaka.

In that claims 22 and 25 depend from claim 14 and for at least the reasons expressed above, the Applicants submit that claims 22 and 25 are allowable over Udaka.

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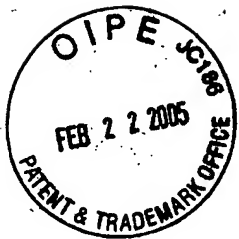
As further discussed during the personal interview, the Applicants respectfully submit that Udaka does not teach, suggest or imply an optical sensor system configured to be mounted to a vehicle, comprising: at least one optical sensor; and at least one electro-optic variable aperture positioned along an optical path of said at least one optical sensor, said electro-optic variable aperture is operable to selectively attenuate light rays, wherein the optical sensor system is incorporated in a vehicle equipment system as recited in claim 27. In that claims 28, 33-35 and 38 depend from claim 27, the Applicants submit that claims 27, 28, 33-35 and 38 are allowable over Udaka.

The Applicants, therefore, submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. The Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued. Please contact the undersigned should additional information be required.

Respectfully submitted,
FREDERICK T. BAUER ET AL.
By: Gentex Corporation

February 16, 2005
Date

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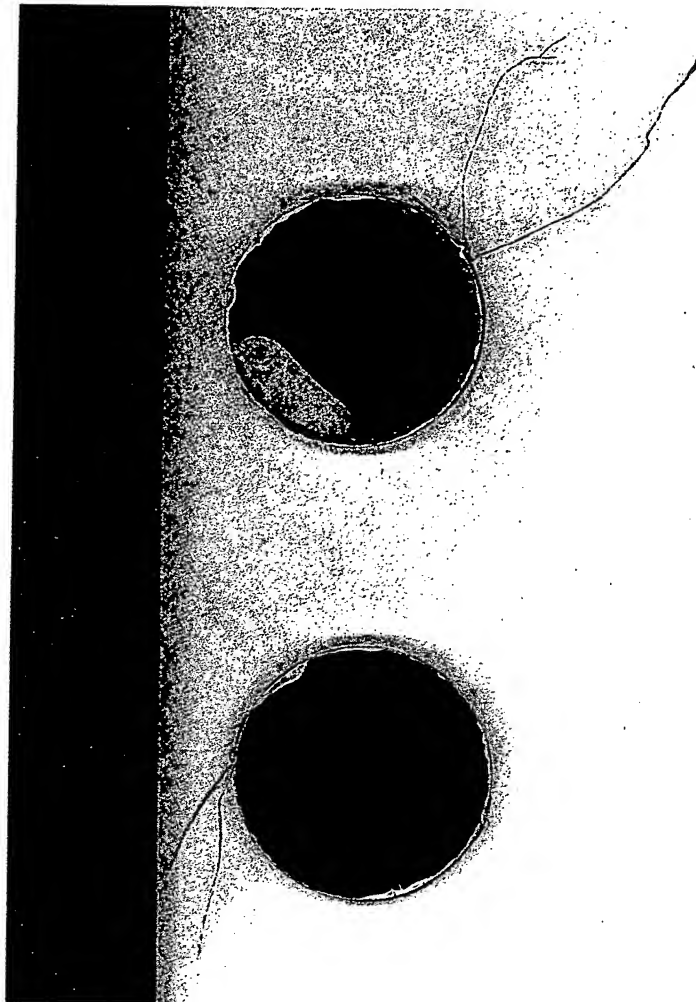


Exhibit B

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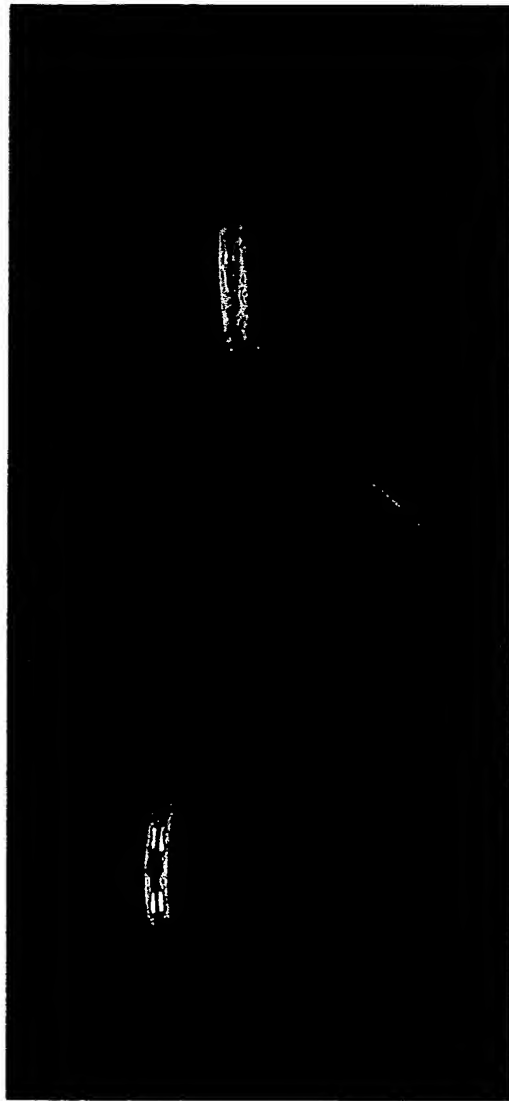


Exhibit C